

**CLAIMS:**

1. A method of transporting point to point protocol (PPP) traffic over an asynchronous transport link, the method including encapsulating the traffic in minicells, and transporting said minicells in a single virtual circuit.
- 5 2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said traffic originates from a number of users, and wherein said minicells are multiplexed within the virtual circuit.
3. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein said minicells are of variable length.
- 10 4. A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein said minicells form the payload of fixed length asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) cells.
5. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the PPP traffic incorporates protocol identifiers, and wherein there is a one to one relationship between each said protocol identifier and a respective minicell  
15 address.
6. A method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the PPP traffic comprises the ATM packet payload, wherein each said packet incorporates a packet header having a channel identifier field, and wherein the least significant octet of the protocol identifier is transmitted in said channel identifier field.
- 20 7. A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein the channel identifier field incorporates an address space, and wherein the first octet of the payload is selectively available to accommodate the most significant octet of the channel identifier field .
8. A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the channel identifier field  
25 contains an encoded value, and wherein the channel identifier is determined from said encoded value via a stored table of channel identifiers.
9. A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the least significant bit of the least-significant octet of the channel identifier field is used to indicate the presence or absence of the most-significant octet.

10. A method of trunking voice calls in an ATM network such that the multiple voice channels form a trunk group carried over a single point to point protocol (PPP) ATM trunk.

11. Apparatus for transporting point to point protocol (PPP) traffic over an asynchronous transport link, the apparatus including means for encapsulating the traffic in minicells, and means for transporting said minicells in a single virtual circuit.

Add  
A15